Couples share the beginnings of their romance

By Petey Husson

Spring is the time that poets proclaim the heart turns to romance, but February has a built-in day for recognizing that love and romance. Valentine's Day is traditionally a day for reminding yourself and the one you love of the special and unique qualities that bind you together.

Oftentimes after years of marriage, the beginnings of the love that couples share is put in the back of the mind. That beginning is not always the first date, but that moment when one person takes notice of or is actually introduced to their future spouse. Whatever the circumstances, asking someone, "How did you meet your spouse?" has a universal effect - a big grin and a shake of the head as they happily reflect on that first moment. Some of those shared memories may seem to be ordinary but taken all together they become special, not just in the moment but in the telling.

Many of the older residents of Poquoson happily speak of their days of fun and courtship. In their early years, groups of young people had home parties where there was singing with piano accompaniment and games. Another favorite place to meet others was centered in the churches. Single dating at a young age was not as common as today. Sometimes "a whole group of Fox Hill boys came to visit and some Poquoson girls married these young men." After graduating high school, couples would go to the movies at Hampton. There were no hamburger places or entertainment facilities such as we have now. Friends might go clamming or crabbing together and become acquainted through their families.

For many couples their story is one of "childhood sweethearts." They met at a young age and the romance blossomed after years of friendship.

Nelson and Alice Nell Firth of Poquoson have known each other since about the 5th or 6th grade. They began dating the summer before their senior years. The day after high school graduation, they were married and settled down near the very homes where they had grown up.

Donnie and Sandra Lawson are also Poquoson natives who became aware of each other when they were about 12 years old. They started dating in eighth grade and the romance lasted through Donnie's college years. They married when he was a senior.

Mike and Linda Montgomery met in junior high school in Dallas and were in the same youth group at church. Even though they were friends, their first date came a few years later when Mike was looking for a date to go to a Dave Brubeck concert. After striking out on a list of 13 girls, Linda "suggested that she could go with him." Mike never dated anyone else after that evening.

Some meetings happen simply by being in the right place at the right time.

Betty Insley Duty's father used to own a service station where Zooms is now located. Jim Duty was living with his sister and brother-in-law who were stationed at Langley. He was at the service station one day when Betty just happened to come in for ice cream. A real 50's romance story!

High school romances are full of fun and frolic. Many turn into lifetime commitments.

Jenny Christman was a freshman and Chris was a junior at PHS when they met as members of the Honor Council, a group which determined punishment for peers who went against the school rules. She and a friend checked out the track team one day to decide who to "patch" for Sadie Hawkins (Ladies Day). Deciding that "Chris had the best legs" she made a heart with her name on it and "patched" him, making him "hers" for the day. As it turned out, he became "hers" for life!

Roslyn Forrest was a freshman at PHS and modeling for a PTO Fashion Show when she met Talmadge, who was a senior. He was playing in a combo which was accompanying the show. They had hamburgers that night and the romance began.

Mark and Cathy Krueger are new in Poquoson, coming from Tyndall AFB in Florida. Mark and Cathy remember becoming acquainted when he first walked her to her locker when they were juniors in high school in Flint, Michigan. He memorized her locker combination and when he recalled it the following week she was so impressed that she decided it would be interesting to date someone who was so aware and had such a good memory. (Actually, he said he simply wrote it down immediately!)

Tom and June Dade were in the ninth grade when he was out in his boat and came upon June and a friend swimming off a sand bar. He tried to pick her up but she was not impressed and didn't really care for him at first. A couple of days later he convinced a mutual friend to introduce them and things went smoothly from that time on.

George and Shirley Lewis met during the summer of their tenth grade year. She attended school in Newport News and he attended a Hampton school. Their best friends were dating and introduced the pair to each other at a blind date.

Many couples meet during the years of college. They share common goals and begin to think about the rest of their life in those years.

Dot Little was the church organist at the chapel at the University of Georgia during her college years. Lit was encouraged by the choir director to join the choir and in doing so, met his future wife.

Craig and Mary Stallings attended Wake Forrest University in Winston Salem, NC. At that time, each student had an assigned seat at chapel. Mary was a freshman, Craig a junior. Mary's resident floor advisor sat next to Craig in chapel. Seeing Mary go down the aisle one day, Craig wondered "who that girl was." The advisor told him, whereupon he called Mary and asked her to go out with his roommate. Mary and the roommate did not hit it off. Later, Craig invited her to go to Homecoming with him. Why he took a chance on taking a stranger to Homecoming she didn't know. When she asks him he just says "he liked the way she looked when he saw her in chapel that day."

Mark and Dott VanDervort attended Nyack College in New York. In their freshman year Mark was a basketball player and Dott was a cheerleader. They met on their first away game of the season. Mark's father takes credit for their first date. When Dott introduced herself as Mark's friend at a game attended by the family, Mark's father mistakenly assumed she meant "girlfriend," and promptly invited her to join the family for steaks in the city. Mark did not object and the romance began.

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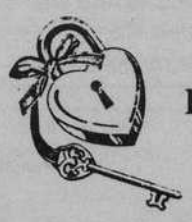

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